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The Role of Communities in Counter-Terrorism: Analysing policy and exploring psychotherapeutic approaches within community settings

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Abstract

The role of communities in preventing or responding to terrorism and political violence is increasingly finding prominence within government strategies, nationally and internationally. At the same time, implementation of effective community based partnerships has been nominal. Adding additional complexity to this problem are policies such as Prevent in Britain which was arguably developed with good intentions but has received significant and sustained criticism by the very communities it sought to engage with. The result has been ongoing discussions within community practice and research arenas associated with radicalisation, extremism, and terrorism,

as to the role, if any, that communities might play in the counter-terrorism environment. This article explores that environment and highlights some of the community based perceptions and initiatives that prevail in the UK. In particular, innovations around the development of psychotherapeutic frameworks of understanding in relation to counter-terrorism are discussed, alongside the role of connectors.

Key Terms

Community, radicalisation, extremism, Prevent, mentoring, counter-terrorism, hard power, soft power, psychotherapy, connector.

Introduction

In recent years there has been an increasing shift in various government strategies to include narratives about engaging communities in their counter-terrorism efforts. Although terrorism is nothing new for many countries, the decline of Al Qaeda as the preeminent threat did little to minimize concern. The rise of the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq immediately reinforced the perception that an existential threat and increasingly internal threat of terrorism exists. Furthermore, the barbaric nature of IS displayed in the media combined with the migration of thousands of 'foreign fighters' from the West going to Syria and Iraq has resulted in high levels of anxiety for those in government. Those in Europe are particularly concerned because of the large numbers of 'foreign fighters' leaving from and returning to European countries where the Schengen Agreement permits free and unobstructed travel across borders.

In response to the ongoing and the newest threat posed by the current foreign fighter phenomenon, governments are proposing more penetrating legislation while simultaneously attempting to impose additional 'responsibilities' on communities in order to maximise their counter-terrorism efforts. This is particularly true in the United Kingdom (UK) where the government recently published its newest counter-terrorism strategy. The newest rendition of the UK's CONTEST strategy is simply titled Counter-Extremism Strategy.[1] Intended to be broader than previous iterations the newest strategy purports to address "the full spectrum of extremism: violent and non-violent, Islamist and neo-Nazi – hate and fear in all their forms."[2] And, although the newest strategy is decidedly broader than previous iterations, the government makes clear from the start that their focus will remain fixed on Muslim communities when it states "The greatest current challenge comes from the global rise of Islamist extremism."[3]

The UK's most recent counter-terrorism strategy is built around four key pillars: countering extremist ideology; supporting mainstream voices; disrupting extremists; and building more cohesive societies.[4] The strategy also references introducing new laws designed to challenge the most troublesome groups and individuals, explores the possibility of revoking citizenship, and strengthens the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to regulate and take punitive action against television and radio stations which broadcast unacceptable material.[5] Although it is not always possible to disaggregate the interconnected parts, of particular relevance here is that the strategy seeks to build more cohesive societies through a proposed Cohesive Communities Programme that will promote opportunity and integration through government/community engagement.[6]

The possible reasons behind the shift to strengthening community based counter-terrorism solutions are numerous and could be argued from a variety of different perspectives. Undoubtedly, the government would argue that policing and ultimately crime reduction has long established roots within the UK and is exemplified in its Peelian policing model. Whether the police are still seen as peers within the community is debatable but the UK government continues to promote the legacy of Robert Peel who advocated that the police are merely citizens in uniform.[7] An alternative and perhaps more cynical view is that government is realising that despite fifteen years of adopting increasingly invasive and controversial counter-terrorism laws it has been unable to legislate or police its way out of the problem of Islamist extremism. Individuals continue to radicalise despite efforts to the contrary. As mentioned above there are surely other arguable positions but regardless of which explanation seems closest to explaining the environment it is clear that the UK government is exercising all of its hard and soft power resources to manage its perception of the threat.

From a conceptual standpoint, it can be said that government and communities have very similar goals when it comes to counter-terrorism in so much as violence is never a tolerable alternative in any robust democratic society. Additionally, because human nature is universal in that no one wants to feel vulnerable, the notion of security can be similarly argued as universal at the governmental, community, and individual levels. However, problems do arise when one person's security is reinforced through the erosion of another person's security.[8] Moreover, this can happen at the individual, group, community, and societal levels. Thus, while security is arguably a universal part of human nature, its application is not.[9]

At the community level the methods to achieve the sense of security can be both remarkably similar to government and at the same time significantly different. As an example, community resources do not possess the same traditional hard power resources that government has such as the power of arrest. At the same time they do possess similar and arguably more effective soft power approaches which include defining mainstream boundaries and passive observation of the environment.[10] Moreover, despite the current political rhetoric that one's acceptability in society is measured predominantly by one's adherence to 'British values' it is the broader social sphere that defines the acceptable margins of society.

Especially in a country as diverse as the UK, there is also an argument that the margins of society are not universal; what is acceptable in one community is potentially not acceptable in another. That acceptability can occur for any number of religious, cultural, gender, sexual, or ethic reasons.[11] Examples might include halal or cosher foods, the acceptance of women working outside the home, male and female segregated professions, the approval of same sex unions, or what clothes are acceptable. Thus, not only do communities establish the boundaries of what is

acceptable and what is not, they passively monitor that environment to insure compliance.[12] When individuals fall outside of defined communal boundaries they are seen as outliers and eyed with scrutiny. This is not entirely dissimilar to government which must attempt to manage those who it considers 'insufficiently socialized' and takes steps to control them through force or conversion.[13] Whether viewed from a governmental or community perspective, those outside of the margins arguably become the socially excluded 'other'.[14] Thus governments and communities are similarly involved in defining, monitoring, and validating the social order. More directly, those within the mainstream are accepted while those outside are not.[15] Another similarity is that each strive to make sure that there are limited unchallenged spaces where individuals can be recruited, plan, or execute violent acts. In most cases the police do that through securitization whereas communities, faith groups, and community activists do that from a social justice perspective.[16]

Despite the idea that government and communities each have mechanisms in place to monitor and ultimately manage the risk of terrorism, their commitment to working with one another to achieve the common goal of safety and security for all has not been a homogenous process. Although the notion of countering violent extremism (CVE) through the soft power mechanisms of community engagement has gained momentum quickly in the policy environment, the practical side of that momentum has proven to be far more challenging to implement. As if each are negotiating with the other, communities, the police, and policy makers are each attempting to define what that partnership should look like. Moreover, although all parties want to broker the best deal for their side, all simultaneously realise that it will be the communities who ultimately decide whether government is a viable partner. Last, even though there is a desire by

communities to engage, government's past prioritisation of security over engagement has left communities suspicious over any newly articulated desire to work together.[17]

Backdrop to Engaging Communities

Historically, there has been a reliance on the ability of the police and security services to disrupt criminal activity, or as is more often the case, investigate crimes once they have been committed with the goal of arresting those responsible.[18] Once arrested, individuals are prosecuted and imprisoned for their crimes. This approach is classically considered the retributive justice model; arrest, conviction, and imprisonment.[19] The basis of the retributive justice model is that individuals convicted of a crime must be punished and thus experience the consequences of their actions. This leads to the reality that most policing resources are not organised on the prevention of criminal activity but rather the investigation of crimes already committed. However, this traditionally based reactive rather than proactive policing model is politically and professionally unacceptable in the counter-terrorism environment.

Counter-terrorism work necessitates that individuals be interdicted before their plot is carried out which puts tremendous pressure on the police and intelligence services to seek every and all means to disrupt plots before they mature while simultaneously attempting to gather sufficient evidence for arrest and conviction.[20] Thus, from both the political perspective and policing perspective there is a constant search for ways to mitigate threats so that risk is managed at an acceptable level. The result is that the police and security service are perpetually uncomfortable about what it is that they don't know. This reality is not dissimilar to the infamous 2002 quote by former US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who made reference to the unknown unknowns as a way to explain his uneasiness regarding possible weapons of mass destruction in

Iraq.[21] The concerns over the unknown unknowns not only epitomises the counter-terrorism working environment for law enforcement and security services personnel but also explains at least some of the motivation for leveraging every possible resource, including those in the community. A concept which is fully understood by communities as well.

To be sure, in recent years there has been growing emphasis placed upon building social resilience to extremist ideologies and organisations. Several policy documents in Britain, the US, Australia and other liberal democratic societies relate the view of the centrality of communities in the prevention or support of terrorism. In Britain, for example, rooted within the Northern Ireland experience, 'communities defeat terrorism' has become a well-entrenched counterterrorism maxim as evidenced by the Prevent Strategy.[22] There has been, and continues to be, a significant onus placed on the community's ability to thwart terrorism through campaigns such as 'See something, say something' in the US and the 'Anti-Terrorist Hotline in the UK. Moreover, to impose a sense of duty, governments are openly advocating that citizenship carries with it certain sets of responsibilities, one of which is counter-terrorism.[23] In the US the Empowering Local Partners strategy invokes a sense of duty when it makes the statement "it becomes the collective responsibility of the U.S. Government and the American people to take a stand."[24] In the UK, the sense of duty is captured in the statement "our society does not just confer rights; it demands responsibilities of us too. You have the freedom to live how you choose to live – but you must also respect the freedom of others to live how they choose to live."[25] Linking those responsibilities with the government's interpretation of 'British Values' the strategy asserts its demand that all citizens subscribe to those values by further stipulating that "we will also consider...how we can more easily revoke citizenship from those who reject our values."[26]

One of the key linkages to community based counter-terrorism efforts can be found in the 2011 review of the Prevent Strategy. In that review, the government articulated that vulnerability to violent extremism was more likely in some places and communities but simultaneously concluded that resilient people, groups and communities have the capability to "rebut and reject proponents of terrorism and the ideology they promote."[27] Similarly, in another 2011 report, the UK Government stated that "challenging and tackling extremism is a shared effort. We welcome the spontaneous and unequivocal condemnation from Muslim community organisations and other faith groups in response to the Woolwich attack."[28] [29] The most recent and direct demonstration of the UK government's desire to partner with the community in the counter-terrorism arena is found in its 2015 Counter-Extremism Strategy whereby partnering with the community is one of the four key strategic pillars. The strategy states that it would "support the individuals and groups who have credibility and experience fighting extremism within their communities, by amplifying their voices and helping them where required."[30] Thus there is ample evidence that the UK government has promoted community partnerships within the counter-terrorism arena for at least the last four years and arguably as far back as 2007 when the Prevent workstream was first introduced into the CONTEST strategy.

The UK has not been alone in its actions. The US adopted a very similar approach and borrowed significantly from the UK when it published its Empowering Local Partners strategy in 2011. Although far less detailed than the UK's Prevent Strategy the Empowering Local Partners Strategy again emphasizes the role of communities by saying "we will continue to assist, engage, and connect communities to increase their collective resilience abroad and at home."[31]

Whether in the US, UK, or beyond, engagement efforts have included a wide range of initiatives. Those initiatives are too numerous to list here but actively seek to involve communities, schools, universities, youth justice agencies, police agencies and others to counter all forms of terrorism, but particularly Al Qaida inspired and now IS inspired terrorism. Widening the net even further, engagement efforts have often included the families of violent offenders, those considered non-violent extremists, and those at risk of radicalisation. Examples include Indonesia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, which all have government sponsored de-radicalisation programmes that seek to provide counter-terrorism intervention for mid-ranking and grassroots members of radical organisations. Supporting families is typically included as an integral part of those programmes as well. Although the family and the offender have different needs, stability and support for both is believed to be required if successful de-radicalisation is to be achieved.[32]

Returning once again to the UK, the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill made the Prevent programme a statutory responsibility for a variety of community based and governmental resources that include: local authorities, schools, universities, health care providers, social services, and police agencies.[33] Within the Prevent workstream the Channel Programme was created as a pilot programme in 2007 and is now one of the cornerstones of the government's counter-terrorism efforts.[34] Channel is designed to support teens and young adults who are at risk of radicalisation but only in the pre-criminal space.[35] Channel interventions work on a bespoke framework that allows Channel review panels to deliver individualised support based on the needs of the individual. The review panels are made up of a wide range of statutory partners but are always led by the police and chaired by a local authority representative.[36] That support might include a variety of mechanisms that range from mentoring, life skills counselling, anger

management training, education opportunities, sports, job placement/employment assistance, family support, drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation programmes, or housing support.[37]

The original Channel concept has also potentially changed with the latest iteration of the UK's Counter- Terrorism Strategy. In previous versions, Channel's aim was always stated as "supporting people at risk of radicalisation"[38] In the most recent publication on Channel Guidance it appears the government has changed the stated aim of Channel to "Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism."[39] Whether this is simple mission creep, an undisclosed plan to expand the Channel Programme, or the conflation that radicalisation is a precursor to terrorism is unclear. However, if the intent is to expand Channel, helping move individuals away from radicalisation to protecting those at risk of terrorism' represents a large conceptual leap for the Channel Programme. Although those that mentor youth in the pre-criminal and those that mentor those coming out of prison after serving sentences related to terrorism both come from community based resources, they require completely different skill sets.[40]

As inferred above, a similar program exists within the UK's National Offender Management Service (NOMS) whereby individuals convicted on terrorism related charges, charges considered terrorism related, or those that have been identified as being radical or extreme are being paired with community based intervention providers as a condition of their license agreements.[41] Although the mentoring of youth and those that have progressed sufficiently to the point of engaging in criminal activity requires significantly different skill sets, one similarity is that those that employ a more holistic approach including social mentoring, employment and housing assistance, and educational activities appear to have greater success rates.[42] Whether there is a

plan to merge Channel and the post-criminal mentoring services is unclear but changes do appear to be forthcoming. In the UK's latest Counter-Extremism Strategy (2015), the document states-

> Individuals further down the path to radicalisation need a particularly intensive type of support. When necessary this support will be mandatory. The Home Office will therefore develop a new de-radicalisation programme to provide this support by spring 2016. This scheme will be available to be used in conjunction with criminal sanctions.[43]

Interesting too is that despite the UK government's commitment to providing support and mentoring services, there is no measurement of efficacy for either programme.[44]

Aside from mentoring, the UK government has engaged in several outreach programmes though its Prevent workstream. Since its inception in 2007 the aim of Prevent has remained consistent; to "stop radicalisation, reducing support for terrorism and discouraging people from becoming terrorists."[45] At its peak, there were 8-10 different nationalised community engagement programs operating in the UK and most were run by the police. Programmes varied in content and covered a spectrum of issues such as: having community members play the role of a counter-terrorism investigation team so that they better understood the process; having the police guide local authority representatives as they developed and took action on a fictional counter-terrorism case so that local government officials understood the process more thoroughly; workshops on radicalisation case studies so that members of the public better understood the process; internal programmes for police so that they could minimise community impacts when counter-terrorism arrests are made; profiles of missed opportunities where statutory partners might have alerted authorities to those planning attacks; engagement with women's groups to create a network of

informed and active community members, and bringing together individuals from a range of statutory bodies to explain their role in Prevent.[46]

The references above demonstrate that increasingly, the UK government has been investing heavily in its community support and engagement activities. Whether that is out of need or out of a desire to maximise its counter-terrorism efforts is unknown but there is clear engagement and support activity occurring. That is not to suggest that the role of traditional policing within the counter-terrorism environment is being changed but rather is to suggest that the police have expanded their role to include community-based resources. There are several reasons for that but certainly one key element is that communities have the credibility and capability to effectively monitor and engage with at risk and high risk individuals that the police just don't have.

Although it can be argued that government is clearly asserting its soft power mechanisms to co-opt community based individuals and resources in its counter-terrorism activities, it can also be argued that it has been somewhat slow in developing that resource. As far back as 1981, academics such as Crenshaw[47] and more recently Galam[48] highlighted the reality that extremists and those involved in terrorism are in fact competing with government for community support. Whether that support is active or passive is simply a matter of scale. Moreover, the importance of that support should not be underestimated. A recent report by the New America Foundation in response to data obtained from the Snowden leaks concluded that the single largest identifiable source for initiating a terrorism investigation came from the category of community/family, not the intelligence or police services.[49] In fact, the community/family category outranked law enforcement by more than a 3:1 margin. Not only does this bring into

question the issue of efficacy and value for money, it highlights the need for the police to develop more trusting relationships within the competitive community environment.

Nothwithstanding the discussion thus far, efforts for effective engagement with community groups have not gone as planned. In the UK, the Prevent agenda has backfired in many ways. According to Kundnani, the Prevent agenda has destabilised police/community relations by casting Muslims as the 'suspect other', undermined community cohesion, eroded the notion of shared values and personal security, and generated widespread mistrust and community pushback resulting in additional space for anti-government sentiment; the exact opposite of its intended purpose.[50] These kinds of reactions, coupled with anti-government sentiment, should be reason to take pause. According to Crelinsten "an important element … in understanding the emergence of terrorism in any society is an appreciation of the forms that counter-terrorism has taken in that society."[51] These examples not only demonstrate the importance of community-based solutions to counter-terrorism but speak to the unintended consequences that can occur when things go wrong.

In many ways the UK has become the proverbial canary in the coal mine when it comes to its counter-terrorism efforts. Reacting to its perception of the 'Islamist threat', in 2000 it began adopting some of the most comprehensive terrorism laws of any country in the West. In a succession of legislative actions between 2000 and 2015 it has adopted six pieces of terrorism law and in doing so it began exercising its hard power prerogative with determination. Despite those efforts, there is no sign that the threat is abating. In fact, as argued by individuals like Kundnani and those in government, the threat has actually increased both domestically and abroad. In response, since 2007 the UK government has put forth significant resources into

expanding its community partnerships and utilised a variety of community based resources to leverage its soft power, especially where it has neither the trust, capability, or capacity to operate. Thus, partnering with community is not only the best option, in many cases it is the only option.

While there are clear successes in some of its mentoring schemes and outreach programmes, there have also been clear failures. As noted by Kundnani those failures have challenged the government/community relationship and brought widespread and significant criticism to the Prevent agenda as a whole.[52] Acknowledging some of its shortcomings, the UK government continues to seek engagement with communities across Britain asking once again for them to place their trust in government. However, despite acknowledging that communities are critical partners in the counter-terrorism environment and that government has limited ability to monitor or influence unchallenged spaces, what seems to be missing is government's ability to put its trust in the community. Arguably, that is a key factor that will have to be negotiated before any meaningful progress and ultimately partnership can be achieved. However, the ability of government to relinquish power and/or extend trust is decidedly challenging in the current politicised environment. Similarly, because the Muslim communities are decidedly heterogeneous, deciding who the community leaders are and which ones to engage with creates a whole new set of challenges for communities and government alike. As a result, the most likely scenario moving forward seems to be an ad hoc approach whereby communities and government exploit opportunities when it is mutually beneficial. Although the scope and function of that relationship will be limited, it has the promise of building the necessary trust that will be required for a longer, more sustainable, and effective relationship.

The relationship between government and communities as discussed is certainly not without its specific challenges. However, interdiction and/or disruption is only the first half of the problem. Managing those at risk of radicalisation and/or those extreme cases that may opt to use violence as a means to communicate their grievances is the second half of the problem. Although government sources suggest that programmes like Channel are effective, they are clearly limited in both scope and capacity. Similarly, even when momentarily setting aside the negative aspects of Prevent, it is arguably limited in its effectiveness at "stop[ing] radicalisation, reducing support for terrorism and discouraging people from becoming terrorists."[53] As a result, a new approach is needed that can augment existing capabilities. One promising option may be to incorporate a more holistic psychotherapeutic approach.

Therapeutic Approaches for Communities in relation to Counter-Terrorism

The importance of the role of communities within counter-terrorism efforts offers the potential for innovative approaches to be developed. So far, one under-explored area in research, policy and practice has been the application of psychotherapeutic frameworks of understanding and interventions within counter-terrorism. Psychotherapeutic approaches offer insights into the connections between thoughts, emotions and behaviour, alongside understandings of how individuals experience and undergo change, and as such counter-terrorism efforts could be enhanced by the incorporation of psychotherapy. The contention of these authors is that an integrative psychotherapeutic framework is most appropriate for applying to non-clinical settings such as counter-terrorism. Integration involves going beyond the confines of any one psychotherapeutic school of thought, to combine a mixture of different approaches into a larger framework.[54] An integrative programme of activity enables the most appropriate

psychotherapeutic tools to be applied depending upon the individual, organization, group and wider social context. Currently, there are a few examples of single school psychotherapeutic approaches being applied to non-clinical settings. For example, a compassion focused therapeutic approach is being developed in the US in relation to police training, in order to promote and develop a police culture that is motivated by compassionate competency, especially in light of many instances of abuses of power committed by police officers. Increasing competency in emotional intelligence and emotional regulation is a core aspect of a compassion focussed approach, with the argument being that as a result of increased competence here police officers will be able to manage more effectively conflict, and they will be able to manage their own stress, frustration and anger better, amongst other things.[55] Integration enables a richer combination of therapeutic tools in order to potentially have a greater impact.[56]

Regarding counter-terrorism, an integrative psychotherapeutic approach would draw upon a wide range of different psychotherapeutic traditions in order to develop greater understanding about the processes involved in radicalization, and in order also to then create new programmes of intervention within community settings. One integrative framework that can be applied to counter-terrorism is that of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) as developed by Prochaska & Norcross.[57] The TTM is a biopsychosocial model explaining intentional change, and as such can be applied to understanding individuals' journeys into and out from radicalization. According to the TTM, psycho-behavioural change can be conceptualised through stages, levels and processes of change. There are six stages of change – pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination. There are five levels of change that a person can experience – at the level of their situational problems, their cognitions, their interpersonal

relationships, their family relationships and their own, intra-personal, conflicts. The processes of change within the TTM explain how people undergo psychological and behavioural change: through consciousness raising; dramatic relief; self re-evaluation; environmental re-evaluation; self-liberation; social liberation; counterconditioning; a helping relationship; amongst others. Applying the TTM to radicalisation research and practice can therefore helpfully provide understandings about the different stages, levels and processes of change that individuals experience and moreover, can then inform the kinds of interventions given to individuals who have been radicalised or who are being drawn into extremism. For instance, a person may be at pre-contemplation stage (meaning that they are unconsciously aware) regarding family dynamics and any connections to them being radicalised, whilst being at preparation stage in terms of becoming prepared to commit acts of violence. Different processes of change can be applied to the different stages of change in this example, as different processes of change are more effective when applied at particular stages of change.[58] So consciousness raising is most appropriate for a person at pre-contemplation stage whereas counter-conditioning might be most appropriate for a person at a preparation stage of change. Thus, the suggestion here is that pre-crime and post-crime interventions can be more effective if informed by the TTM. Clearly, there needs to be research exploring the TTM in relation to counter-terrorism efforts in order to build up an evidence base. Whilst the TTM cannot provide any causal explanations of radicalisation and de-radicalisation, it can provide insights into the ways in which individuals have experienced change. Interestingly, researchers applying the TTM to deal with drug addiction have suggested people can go through the different stages of change in a matter of minutes.[59] Certainly, this would potentially also apply to people experiencing radicalisation.

Another example of how an integrative psychotherapeutic approach can be applied to counter-terrorism efforts is the integration of compassion focussed therapy with cognitive-behavioural approaches. Compassion focussed therapy has been developed by Gilbert.[60] This involves understanding how the brain works and then developing a compassion focussed approach to the challenges of being human. There are three types of affect regulatory systems within the human body: drive/excite/vitality (wanting, pursuing achieving), content/safe/connected (soothing), and threat focussed (protection, safety seeking). Compassion focussed therapy raises awareness within individuals about the nature of their brains and bodies and how individuals' threat systems can be over-stimulated. Techniques to encourage social safeness are promoted in order to encourage parasympathetic activity, especially in the myelinated vagal nerve.[61] Such techniques (including breathing, safe space and compassionate imagery) seem extremely relevant for community based counter-terrorism initiatives in that they could increase individuals' resilience to violent narratives that are perhaps evoking a threat based response within recipients. At the same time, a compassion focused approach can help to ease inter and intra community tensions.

Turning to the integration of cognitive-behavioural psychotherapeutic knowledge, a core theme from cognitive-behavioural approaches is that individuals' reactions to events are as, if not more, important than the actual events themselves. This theme has a long history in that in AD75 Roman philosopher Epictetus argued that 'people are not disturbed by events, but by the view they hold about them'. In order to raise understanding within individuals as to how their thoughts are linked to their behavioural and emotional responses, an ABC model of cognitive-behavioural therapy has been developed, arising from the work of Albert Ellis (1955). A stands for an activating event, B refers to a belief that responds to that event, C being the consequences,

an individual's feelings, behaviours and symptoms. Importantly, this model posits that it is possible to distinguish between a rational and irrational, and a healthy and unhealthy belief. Irrational, unhealthy beliefs are inflexible, illogical, dogmatic and often self-critical, whereas rational, healthy beliefs are flexible, logical and consistent with reality. This model allows a focus upon an activating event and then exploring how that event has made a person feel through an exploration of their thought processes. Individuals can then be empowered to swap irrational, unhealthy beliefs with rational and healthy ones, thereby impacting positively upon their subsequent feelings, behaviours and symptoms[62].

Clearly, there are potential connections between cognitive-behavioural therapeutic approaches and that of complexity theory in relation to radicalisation. Complexity theory posits that funadamentalism and extremism are processes of complexity shutdown.[63] Individuals start to develop inflexible and dogmatic views, they make generalsiaitons that are not supported by any concrete evidence and then ignore alternatives. From some intervention programmes, it has been found that participants can be encouraged to maximise a wider range of their own values in order to increase the complexity of their thinking.[64] New programmes are currently being suggested that will draw upon cognitive-behavioural therapeutic models in relation to developing critical thinking skills amongst young people in particular, so that they can be more resilient to radicalisaiton. Such programmes include psychoeducation about rational and irrational thoughts and common thinking errors, an exploration of the relaitonship between thoughts and emotions, and an exploration of healthy and unhealthy emotions and how these link to thinking patterns.[65] It is important to roll out such programmes across school and also community settings because often there is a limited number of national intervention providers.

Additionally, connectors can be trained in psychotherapeutic frameworks and techniques. The importance of the role of connectors within counter-terrorism initiatives within community settings has been previously discussed.[66] Connectors 'may act within contexts characterised by low political and social trust …As such, connectors carry the risk of being considered to be informants for the police'. Connectors also are not necessarily community leaders because they can challenge social injustice; however, connectors can have the trust of disenfranchised and marginalised individuals who may be at risk of radicalisation. A more recent study of connectors[67] has found that connectors seem to share similar social, geographical and cultural backgrounds to the young people that they support, and this gives them the credibility to reach out to young people who are distrustful of more formal mechanisms of engagement. The connectors themselves have experienced radicalisation, domestic violence, alcoholism, economic deprivation, and violence, and it seems to be these experiences that not only inspire them to support young people but also these experiences serve as the social glue, connecting them to young people. It is important to stress that the response of connectors is often informal in that they rarely seek help from the authorities and are keen to keep young people away from the attention of statutory agencies. The work that connectors undertake in relation to keeping young people safe from violence and from radicalisation can therefore be enhanced by training them in integrative therapeutic approaches, including training them about the TTM, compassion-focused and cognitive-behavioural approaches. This might be one way of enhancing individual and community safety within a counter-terrorism context where there is distrust of the authorities.

Conclusion

Despite government acknowledgements that community engagement and community based counter-terrorism efforts are critical in stemming the tide of radicalisation and potential violence, the ability to engage effectively, promote trust, and support the role of organically driven community based counter-terrorism initiatives remains a work in progress. Whereas government efforts in places like the US remain in their infancy, places like the UK have a substantial history of developing a variety of programmes and approaches but with varied success. Moreover, some programmes have been found to be not only unsuccessful, but in some cases detrimental. Thus, the mix and balance of hard and soft power mechanisms is a complex one that is not easily achieved.

Although security remains the ultimate goal of both government and communities, the manner in which that goal is achieved differs; governments largely seek security though legislation and policing whereas communities seek security through social justice mechanisms. These varied approaches epitomise the often dichotomous notions of human security verses state security. Similarly, in the counter-terrorism environment there is the growing argument that state security will only be achieved when sufficient levels of human security are in place. Moreover, because human security is ultimately perceived though one's thoughts and emotions, and those ultimately drives behaviour, there may be a place for a variety of non-government interventions such as therapeutic methods in the counter-terrorism environment.

Therapeutic frameworks of understanding clearly have a potential significant contribution to make to community-based approaches to counter-terrorism. It is important for policy makers, practitioners and community members to be informed about the insights and interventions that

therapeutic approaches can provide. This will involve gaining a political and social acceptability of using therapeutic approaches outside of a clinical setting.

Regardless of what approach is used or how hard and soft power is utilised, collaboration and cooperation is only likely to occur when there is mutual trust. Moreover, governments will have to put their faith and trust in communities before communities will restore their faith and trust in government. If and when that happens, more widespread and effective community based counter-terrorism will begin.

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